

Page 2 DC SHARP

PERIL TO TAIWAN MINIMIZED BY U. S.

Air Force Secretary, on Tour,
Discounts Gradual Build-Up
of Red Chinese Forces

Special to The New York Times

HONG KONG, May 14—Dudley C. Sharp, Secretary of the Air Force, said here today that he saw no immediate threat in a reported build-up of Chinese Communist forces opposite Taiwan.

At the same time, he said that an "explosive condition" existed in Taiwan Strait and that the United States was trying to be "ready at all times."

Mr. Sharp said also that the Defense Department and the State Department had given the go-ahead for delivery of F-104-A Starfighters to the Chinese Nationalists and that a number of these planes were now en route to Taiwan.

The Air Force Secretary, who arrived here from Taipei yesterday for a brief visit, made his remarks in an interview.

Build-Up Termed Gradual

Commenting on the Nationalist statement yesterday that the Communists had increased their ground forces near the offshore islands to 400,000 men and on reports from Taipei speculating that the Communists might be preparing an attack on the islands, Mr. Sharp said the Communist strength had been increasing for some time.

"We have not been informed of anything that looks like a build-up for immediate action," he added.

"You never can tell what they are going to do. They



Associated Press

COMMENTS ON CHINA:
Dudley C. Sharp, the U. S. Secretary of the Air Force.

might try something. They are pretty powerful."

"However, they have been pretty strong over there for a long time," he continued. "We understand their army force is quite strong."

Asked about Nationalist reports crediting the Communists with missile bases along the Fuchien coastline, Mr. Sharp said:

"I have no official information that they have any guided missiles. However, this does not mean they do not have them. We have to suspect always that they do."

U. S. Matching Air Power

Asked whether the Nationalists were getting Starfighters in view of reports that the

Communists were deploying MIG-19s opposite Taiwan, Mr. Sharp replied:

"It is necessary for the Nationalist Chinese to have more modern aircraft. It is reasonable to assume the Soviet will furnish the Chinese Communists with more modern aircraft. Our side ought to try to stay ahead."

Asked how the two planes compared, Mr. Sharp said that although they had never met in combat he was sure the Starfighter would outperform the MIG-19.

Meanwhile, the newspaper Jenmin Jihpao (People's Daily) of Peiping threatened retribution against the United States for its "repeated military provocations" against Communist China.

Commenting on the latest alleged intrusion by United States planes over the Paracel Islands, the paper said:

"We must tell the United States aggressors bluntly that one by one these debts have

been recorded and they will have to be repaid sooner or later."

Premier Chou En-lai of Communist China gave his blessing to the summit conference today in a joint statement with Premier Pham Van Dong of North Vietnam. Mr. Chou has just returned from a visit to Cambodia and North Vietnam.